

Understanding Local Water Collaboration for the Potential to Enhance Community Source Water Protection at Chippewas of the Thames First Nation

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Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that the land we are standing on has a relationship with the past, present and future First Nations people.

Land of the Petun, Anishinabewaki, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenosaunee

Treaty territory of Lake Simcoe
Nottawasaga Treaty #18

Purpose

To understand how collaboration among local water actors can support First Nations community-level source water protection.



Background

First Nations populations are disproportionately affected by water contamination events (source water contamination).

On-reserve drinking water systems need SWP, and it needs to be inclusive of all actors in a watershed. Federal policies support SWP on-reserves.

Limited published literature on SWP that is inclusive of First Nations communities and collaborative relationships with water actors.

Literature Review

Conceptual foundation:

- Collaboration
- Water Security
- Source Water Protection

Water security therefore requires source water protection and collaboration among water actors



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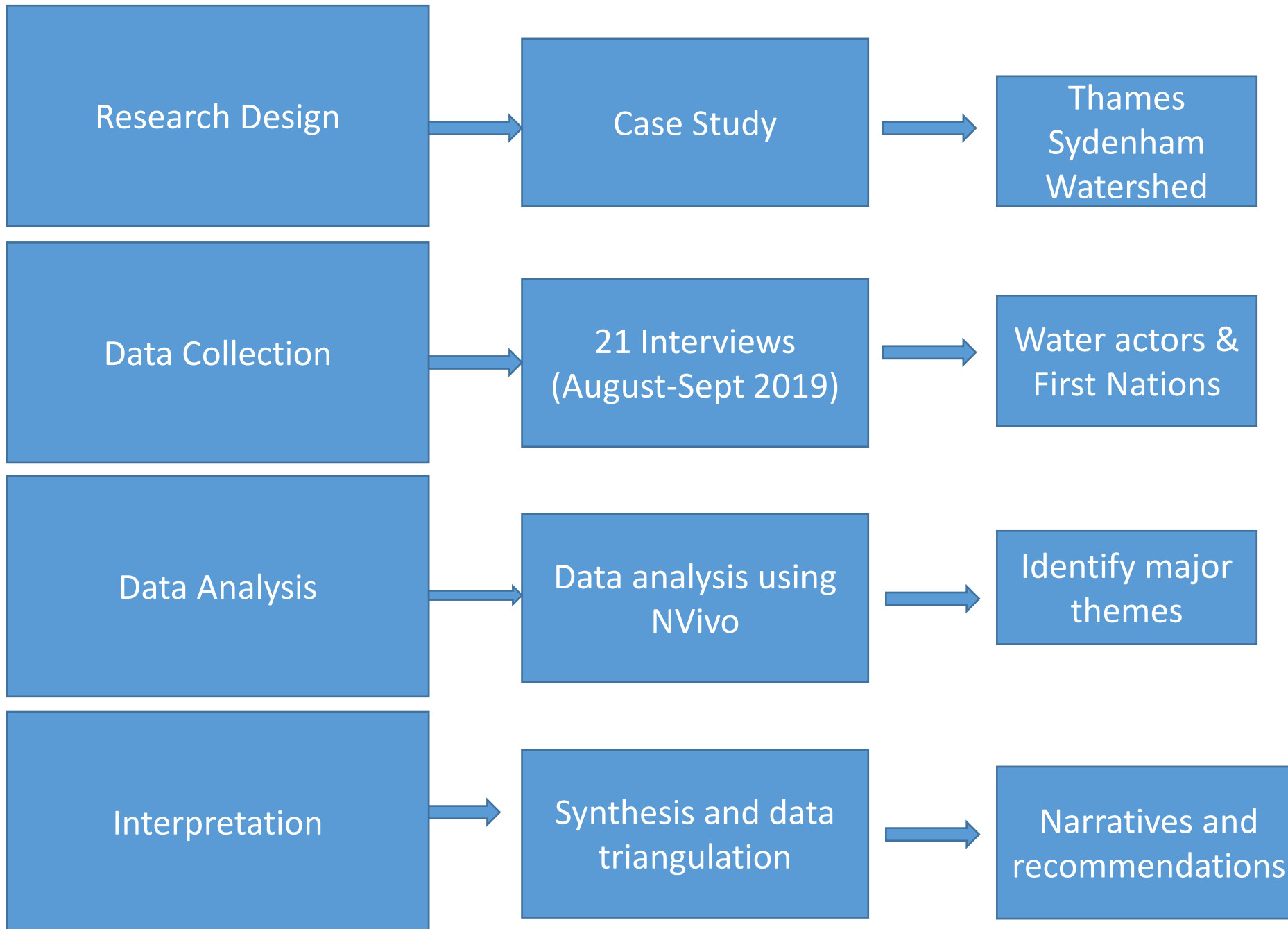
Research Objectives

Objective 1: To understand the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of First Nations, Conservation Authorities and Municipalities as it relates to water collaboration.

Objective 2: To identify and critically examine collaborative approaches that currently exist for application to First Nations source water protection in Ontario.

Objective 3: Generate recommendations for enhanced collaboration within the watershed to support First Nation local-level source water protection.

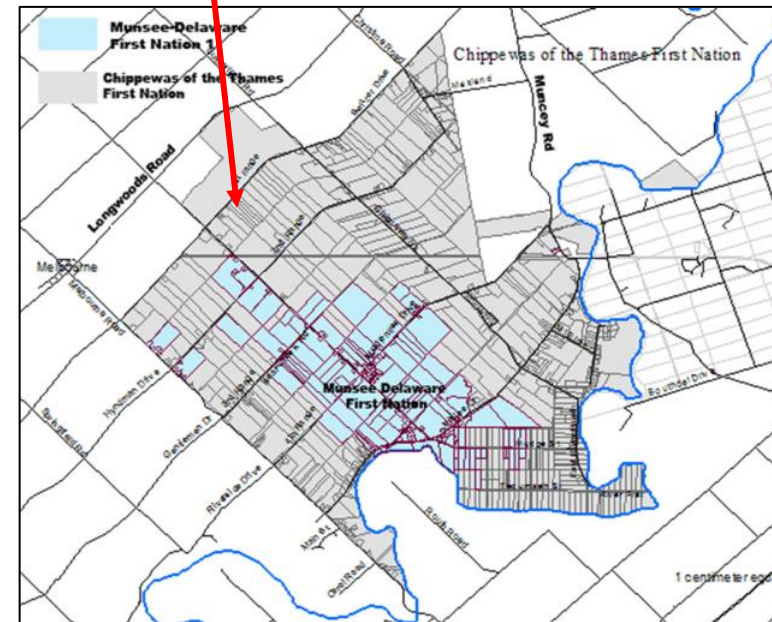
Methods



Case Context

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation

- Size of community: 3331 hectares
- Population (on-off): 896 on and 1524 off
- Single signatories to the Longwoods Treaty 1818-1822
- Anishinaabeg
- Established in 1760
- Primary water actors: City of London, Lower Thames CA, Upper Thames CA, St. Clair CA, Regional Water Authority




What we heard

*“We are in two canoe’s going down a river, keep your paddle
in your own canoe and we’ll go together with it”
(participant, personal communication)*



Collaborative Activities – Working toward a Typology

Collaboration with Chippewa of the Thames First Nation	Action-able Collaboration	Consultative Collaboration	Communication Collaboration	Civic Collaboration
Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roads maintenance agreement - Clear Water Revival - Operator Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class Environmental Assessments Consultation - Planning Act Consultation - PPS directed consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notification system for storm water overflows - Join board for hockey arena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Powwow - The River Talks
Conservation Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear Water Revival - Floodplain Mapping - Phosphorus reduction projects - Tree planting - Fresh water muscle workshops - Wetland restoration - Seed gathering - Antler River Guardians of 4 directions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Park Structure - Interpretive signage - Provide canoes for training - Car Pass for plant gathering



What are the key challenges to collaboration?

- Competing priorities
- Understanding different worldviews
 - Terminology
 - Frameworks
 - Value of water
- Budgeting for collaboration

“It does make things difficult because municipalities kind of looking at water as a commodity. It's something that you buy and sell. And so every now and then in discussions may be stalled or, that issue may come up that can't be resolved” (participant, personal communication).

Navigating governance structures and uncertainty

“Relationships are definitely important for long term collaboration. If you have a lot of turnover either if it's on the community side or on the city side, then that's difficult to maintain a relationship because you don't have that existing trust and you don't even know who to contact” (participant #4, personal communication)



Conclusion

1. Water actors and COTTFN generally agree on the meaning of collaboration
2. Meaning is translated into action in different ways depending on the external water actor
3. SWP activities outside of the Clean Water Act occur as informal collaboration
4. Collaboration should allow for groups to work together while maintaining autonomy
5. Collaborative SWP will need to overcome challenges faced by First Nations and water actors

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Thank You • Miigwetch

Questions?

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